

were not long in following, and soon enough families had settled along the creek to establish the nuclei for two communities known as the upper and lower settlements.

The upper settlement was first settled by Peter Shirts, John and Ephraim Hanks, and a Mr. Riggs in 1860.<sup>3</sup> It was later named Mound City because of the numerous limestone formations in the region. A number of hot water springs flow from the bench land around upper Snake Creek, and over a period of many years they have deposited limestone sufficient to form a crust several inches thick on much of the surrounding land. The springs have also built up a number of good-sized limestone mounds at the point where they flow from the ground. The enterprising people in the valley cleared much of the porous limestone, known as pot rock, from the ground in order to farm. It was then piled up for fences or shaped for building material and many prominent and substantial buildings were made from it. The hot water in turn provided the basis for commercial warm water swimming activities and health resorts.

The growth of the upper and lower settlements required some sort of organization to coordinate the activity of the various families. In both places, as in other Latter-day Saint pioneer communities too small for organization into a ward, this was supplied originally by a presiding elder of the Church who, when sustained by the Church members, exercised political, judicial, military, and religious authority. In 1862 Sidney Epperson was appointed presiding elder over the upper settlement with John Fausett and Samuel Thompson as his counselors. By 1864 the lower settlement included some twenty families, and David Van Wagonen was appointed as the presiding elder there.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Simon Epperson, *Sidney Epperson Pioneer* (Heber, Utah: 1927), p. 20.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

The settlements continued to grow independently until Indian trouble threatened the settlers in 1866. In their exposed positions all along the creek the families were extremely vulnerable to the type of raid made by the Indians. The Church leaders advised them to join together and build a fort for their mutual protection. Tradition states that the question of the fort's location was a warm issue between the residents of both settlements. Loyal citizens of Mound City were extremely reluctant to leave the obvious virtues of their high surroundings to join the lower settlement, and the equally patriotic stalwarts of the lower settlement were just as naturally inclined to reject the offer to join the upper settlement. Finally, as a result of compromise, they built the fort midway between the two, and thus the present town of Midway got its name and location.

By mid-summer of 1866 seventy-five cabins stood on the fort line.<sup>5</sup> Some of them were moved from the old settlements. The fort was never attacked, which fact itself is a tribute to the ability of the pioneers to cooperate in overcoming common difficulties.

In 1868 the families began to move out of the fort line into homes on the present Midway townsite, and the old fort line formed the public square for the new town.

